

# Office of Victim Services

## 2006 Annual Report





April 11, 2007

The Honorable Adrian Fenty  
Mayor, District of Columbia

Members of the Council  
District of Columbia

Dear Mayor Fenty and Members of the Council,

I am pleased to provide you with the 2006 Office of Victim Services (OVS) Annual Report. Through the efforts of OVS and the programs that the agency funds, victims of violent crime in the District receive care and support during traumatic periods of their lives. OVS's mission is to ensure that all individuals who experience violent victimization have access to and obtain quality services provided by skilled providers at District and community agencies. In 2006, OVS funded fifty-two projects and programs in the District that afforded crisis response, counseling, advocacy, case management, court accompaniment, shelter, and assistance with victim compensation to over 17,000 victims and family members. The 2006 Annual Report offers a snapshot of the year's accomplishments and charts a course for the future.

At its inception in 2004, OVS created a Strategic Plan to develop and institutionalize a comprehensive response to the needs and concerns of crime victims in the District. Each year, OVS has made considerable progress towards the realization of this goal. At the end of FY 2006, OVS is proud to say that the capacity-building phase of the Strategic Plan is complete. Today, core services are in place for crime victims and OVS has shifted its focus to establishing sustainable funding streams for the programs it supports. At the same time, as OVS moves into the third quarter of FY 2007, it will invest time and effort in special initiatives, requiring cross agency support that will address critical challenges in the areas of legislation, transitional housing and teen victimization. By the end of 2007 the Victim Service Center, a one-stop "shop" providing services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and co-victims of homicide will open its doors; and two new emergency and transitional housing programs should be receiving families of domestic violence victims and their children.

To ensure that OVS initiatives are relevant, cost effective and meeting the needs of victims in the District, OVS has met with policymakers, not-for-profit organizations, government agencies and members of the community, including crime victims, to obtain their perspectives on the state of affairs in local victim services. These discussions have been instrumental in the formation of OVS recommendations for the next three years.

With the submission of the 2006 Annual Report, OVS expresses its appreciation to Mayor Williams and the Council for the interest and support that they have provided to the agency over the past year. I look forward to working with Mayor Fenty and the newly elected members of the Council just as closely. Moreover, OVS extends its heartfelt thanks to the dedicated individuals who—with kindness, sensitivity, and respect—have helped District victims rebuild their lives.

Melissa Hook  
Director

## YEAR IN REVIEW

- In 2006, OVS-funded programs served over **17,000** victims of violent crime, including 2,345 child victims, 8,326 victims of domestic violence, 2,966 victims of sexual assault, 1,206 co-victims of homicide, and 2,195 victims of trafficking.
- In 2006, the Office of Victim Services awarded more than **\$2.2 million** in federal funds to not-for-profit organizations and District agencies that provide services to adult and child victims of abuse, neglect, and sexual assault, victims of domestic violence, victims of trafficking, and co-victims of homicide.
- In 2006, over **\$2 million** of the Crime Victim Assistance Fund was awarded to not-for-profit organizations as capacity-building Increased Services grants.
- In 2006, over **\$3.1 million** of the Crime Victim Assistance Fund and local funds was awarded to not-for-profit organizations in the form of construction grants to develop sixty-eight new emergency beds for victims of domestic violence.
- In 2006, over **\$2.7 million** of the Crime Victim Assistance Fund was awarded for the creation of a one-stop Victim Service Center that will house a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner's clinic; the Sexual Assault Response Team; not-for-profit organizations that provide services and legal assistance to victims of sexual assault; services and legal assistance to victims of domestic violence; and services to co-victims of homicide; and a representative from the Crime Victim Compensation Program.
- In 2006, **\$1.6 million** of the Crime Victim Assistance Fund was awarded to not-for-profit organizations to collaborate as coalitions; develop consensus over critical challenges in their respective fields; educate the public about the impact of domestic violence, sexual assault, and homicide on survivors and family members; and provide information about the availability of services for victims of these crimes.

More than half of OVS funds in 2006 were dedicated to improving services and creating emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence. Another twenty-five percent was directed towards the development of a one-stop Victim Service Center as well as general crime victim services. The remaining funds represent an investment in services to victims of sexual assault, child victimization and co-victims of homicide.

## 2006 SPENDING FOR OVS BY CATEGORY OF SERVICES



## BUILDING CAPACITY IN DISTRICT VICTIM SERVICES

### Background

In 2003, a Victim Services Planning Group was established to provide recommendations for strategic allocations of resources to develop core victim services in the District. The group’s mission was to “create victim-focused recommendations for developing and implementing a comprehensive, accessible, sustainable, seamless system of services for victims of violent crime.” The Group’s recommendations were incorporated into an Action Plan which has served as a blueprint for capacity-building among the providers of victim services in the District from 2004-2006. The following section is the final report on the implementation of the Action Steps strategy.

## FINAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OVS ACTION PLAN

### Action Step #1

Increase the Amount of Emergency Shelter Beds and Transitional Housing for victims of violent crime.

- My Sister’s Place received \$1 million in local funding to assist in the completion of the Sanctuary Plus Capital Campaign that will pay for the renovation and expansion of its shelter for victims of domestic violence.
- House of Ruth received \$1,390,000 from the Crime Victim Assistance Fund to purchase and renovate a building that will provide 48 additional emergency shelter beds.
- OVS entered into a collaborative agreement with the District Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to combine resources on the funding of transitional housing projects for victims of domestic violence and their children.

### Action Step #2

Provide core funding for the expansion of services to victims.

- OVS awarded \$2.5 million in 2006 for Increased Services from the Crime Victim Assistance Fund.

### Action Step #3

Research, develop and implement a system that provides 24-hour language access for victims of violent crime.

- OVS funds positions for bi-lingual victim advocates in not-for-profit organizations.

### Action Step #4

Create model projects that best serve victims of crime.

- The first year of the multi-year Model Projects were completed in the areas of domestic violence, sexual assault and support to co-victims of homicide.
- OVS developed a funding opportunity in which a child advocacy center, a medical facility that conducts forensic examinations of abused and neglected children and a mental health provider have been invited to collaborate on an initiative to develop a comprehensive response to child trauma caused by victimization. The funds for the initiative were awarded in February, 2007.

### Action Step #5

Develop and implement a Victim Service Center and/or a consolidated services model that best serves victims of violent crime in the District.

- OVS awarded \$2,774,513 to DC Rape Crisis Center to purchase and renovate a building as a Victim Service Center (VSC). A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner’s Center will be established at the VSC, as well as counseling and case management services for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and co-victims of homicide. A suitable building was identified in Northeast Washington and plans are proceeding to open the facility in October 2007.

### Action Step# 6

Establish an Office of Victim Services within the Executive Office of the Mayor.

- Mayor Anthony A. Williams established the Office of Victim Services in 2004.

### Action Step #7

Develop training materials and institutionalize training efforts to ensure all personnel who serve victims are adequately prepared.

- OVS awarded multi-year Outreach and Education grants in the areas of domestic violence, sexual assault and homicide. In each collaborative project, service providers work together to develop appropriate outreach and training materials in their areas of expertise.
- The Office for Victims of Crime at the U.S. Department of Justice awarded a three-year grant to OVS to develop a District Crime Victim Assistance Academy, which will educate governmental and not-for-profit service providers and allied professionals about the needs of crime victims.

### Action Step # 8

Expand education efforts to the community on crime victim issues.

- OVS funded outreach to educate the community about the needs and concerns of crimes victims through the above-mentioned Outreach and Education grants in the areas of domestic violence, sexual assault and homicide. In addition, OVS has awarded grants to other not-for-profit organizations in which a portion of their mandate has been to educate the community about crime victim issues.

### Action Step #9

Coordinate and expand relationships with existing community efforts to enhance services to crime victims.

- Action Step #9 is fully integrated into mandated OVS responsibilities.

### Action Step #10

Develop a District Wide outreach plan

- Action Step #10 has been fulfilled through the creation of the outreach and education projects in the area of domestic violence, sexual assault, and homicide.

### Action Step #11

Develop cross system policies and procedures to ensure effective services throughout the system of care.

- The creation of cross system policies and procedures that improve services is an ongoing district-wide effort among agencies and not-for-profit organizations that provide services to victims.

### Action Step #12

Develop a comprehensive legislative agenda for best meeting the needs of crime victims within the District.

- Promoting legislative initiatives that improve District support to crime victims and system compliance in the delivery of victims' rights is an ongoing OVS effort. OVS has initiated a study of District law and policy as it pertains to crime victims that will be completed in September 2007.

Going forward in 2007, OVS will shift its focus from completing capacity-building Action Steps to sustaining core services that have been created.

## WHAT'S IN THE PIPELINE FOR FY 2007?

### I. TEEN VICTIMIZATION INITIATIVE

In May 2007, the DC Office of Victim Services (OVS) will launch a wide-reaching District Teen Victimization Initiative to better address the dire need for support and care among the District's population of adolescent victims. District youth are experiencing levels of violence in their neighborhoods and communities that may seriously limit their ability to be successful in life. Witnessing the violent death of a family member or friend, experiencing (or witnessing) intra-familial violence, a shooting, a sexual assault, battery, and/or dealing with the intimidation that comes with stalking or gang membership can have long term debilitating effects. Yet, violent victimization is commonplace among youth in the District and for many, the trauma and loss of self-esteem that comes with victimization is simply one more negative condition of life that burdens them.

OVS has funded several successful projects that address the needs and concerns of teen victims. They are spread among various providers with expertise in specific areas of victimization services and support. OVS funds provide support for media outreach, a teen council, weekly school programs, legal assistance and counseling to teen victims of sexual assault, dating violence, family violence, prostituted teens in the sex industry, and co-victims of homicide. Many are language appropriate programs created to meet the needs of underserved populations of teen victims. As part of its 2007 initiative, OVS will create an umbrella activity for all of the initiatives to coordinate and maximize their effectiveness.

Without coordination with other District government programs that serve at-risk youth, victim services to teens have a limited reach. Thus, the Teen Victimization Initiative will interface with the District's Youth Initiative and the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group activities under the Office of Justice Grants Administration.

### II. EMERGENCY AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING INITIATIVE

The DC Office of Victim Services (OVS) has entered into a collaborative agreement with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to develop a model program in which the two agencies combine resources to facilitate the creation of new residential facilities for victims of domestic violence.

In this program, the OVS Shelter Fund and the DHCD Initiative Project Fund support domestic violence service providers in the purchase and renovation of buildings suitable for emergency and transitional housing. The OVS Shelter Fund will assist in subsidizing the rent and utilities for the buildings and pay for counseling and case management for the domestic violence victims and their families who live in the units.

### III. EXAMINING THE RIGHTS OF CRIME VICTIMS IN THE DISTRICT

The DC Office of Victim Services has awarded a FY 2007 grant to the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the District's law and policy framework related to victims of crime. The District's Crime Victims' Bill of Rights ensures certain rights for victims of crime but not comprehensively. At the same time, laws and policies relating to offender rights often (inadvertently) have a negative impact on the experience of individual victims.

Through this partnership with NCVC, the Office of Victim Services will arrive at a clear picture of all the laws that impact crime victims in the DC Code, directly and indirectly. Victim-related laws in the Code will be compared with laws across the nation that have been reviewed and refined over a period of years. OVS hopes to identify gaps in District laws where new legislation may be warranted.

NCVC will draw on its extensive experience analyzing and annotating thousands of victim-related federal and state laws making use of VictimLaw, the statutory database they have created under a federal grant from the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office for Victims of Crime. The report that NCVC produces based on the assessment, will provide the District with a valuable blueprint for enhancing legal measures to support crime victims, encourage them to participate fully in the system, and help them rebuild their lives.

### IV. DISTRICT CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE ACADEMY

OVS has been awarded a grant from the DOJ's Office for Victims of Crime to develop a District Crime Victim Assistance Academy. The award is an important development for DC victims and victim services. This highly collaborative project will result in a five-day university level program to be attended by law enforcement, juvenile and criminal justice practitioners, victim service providers, and allied professionals. The academic program will be created by DC professionals for DC professionals, will be based on DC law and policy, and will educate participants about the rights, needs and concerns of victims of violent crime.

The academic partner in this project is the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Other partners include the DC Rape Crisis Center; the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence (representing nine domestic violence service providers, several of whom assist underserved populations); the Wendt Center for Loss and Healing, (which is spearheading the District-wide Homicide Outreach Project Empowering Survivors); the DC Children's Advocacy Center; the Freddie Mac Foundation Child and Adolescent Protection Center; the DC Superior Court Research and Training Office and Crime Victims' Compensation Office; the DC Office of the Attorney General; and the US Attorney's Office. Once established, the Academy will be repeated on an annual basis.

### THE CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE FUND (VAF)

#### Background

In 1996, the District of Columbia Crime Victims Compensation Fund (Fund), which is managed by a federal agency within the DC Superior Court, lacked the resources to reimburse all violent crime victims entitled to compensation. To address this need, Congress passed legislation in 1997 that assigned court filing fees and criminal fines to the Fund. Over the next few years, the filing fees, which average several million dollars a year, were more than the Compensation Program was able to distribute to crime victims. Unobligated funds accumulated quickly.

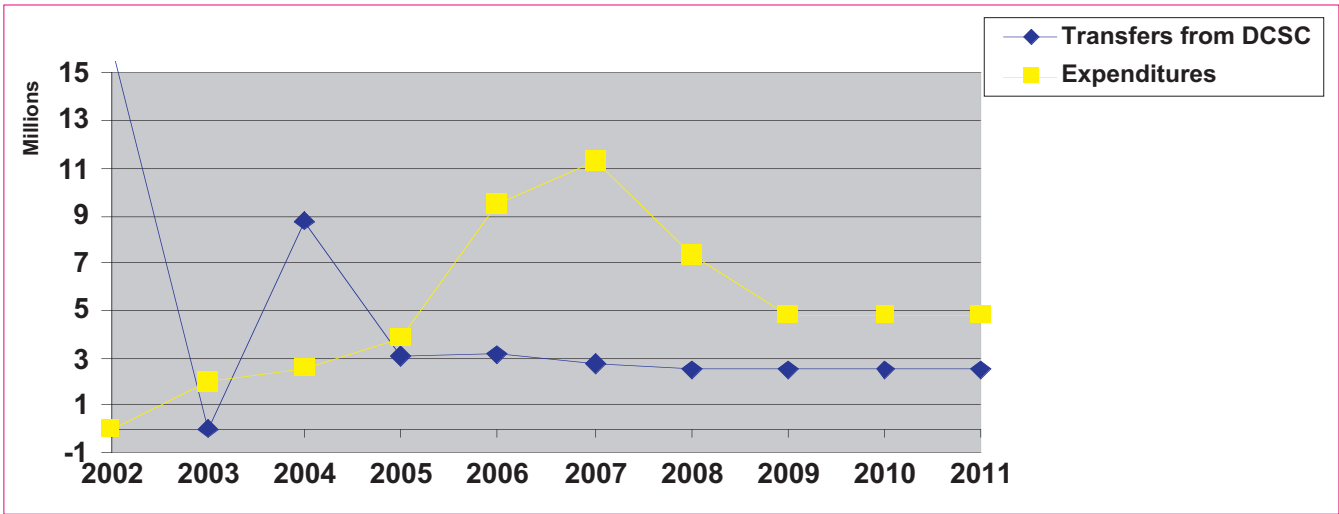
Congress passed additional legislation in 2001 that allowed for fifty percent of the unspent and un-obligated "comp" funds to be transferred from the Superior Court to the District of Columbia to develop victim services. The District Government created the Victim Assistance Fund (VAF) to house these funds, and the Office of Victim Services to manage their distribution through awards to sub-grantees in the city. The District is the only state or territory in the nation with this unique funding stream.

From 2002 to 2004, the DC Superior Court transferred over \$24 million dollars to the VAF. In 2005 and 2006, the deposits in the VAF from the court averaged \$3.1 million a year. OVS estimates that transfers from the court in 2007 and 2008 will range from \$2.3 to \$2.5 million.

During OVS’s capacity-building years, awards from the VAF to District not-for-profit and government victim service providers trailed deposits from the DC Superior Court and a surplus of funds remained. Significant progress was made in the creation of capacity among providers in FY 2004 and FY2005. By FY2006, VAF awards increased substantially and included construction projects for the creation of domestic violence shelters and a victim service center, as described above.

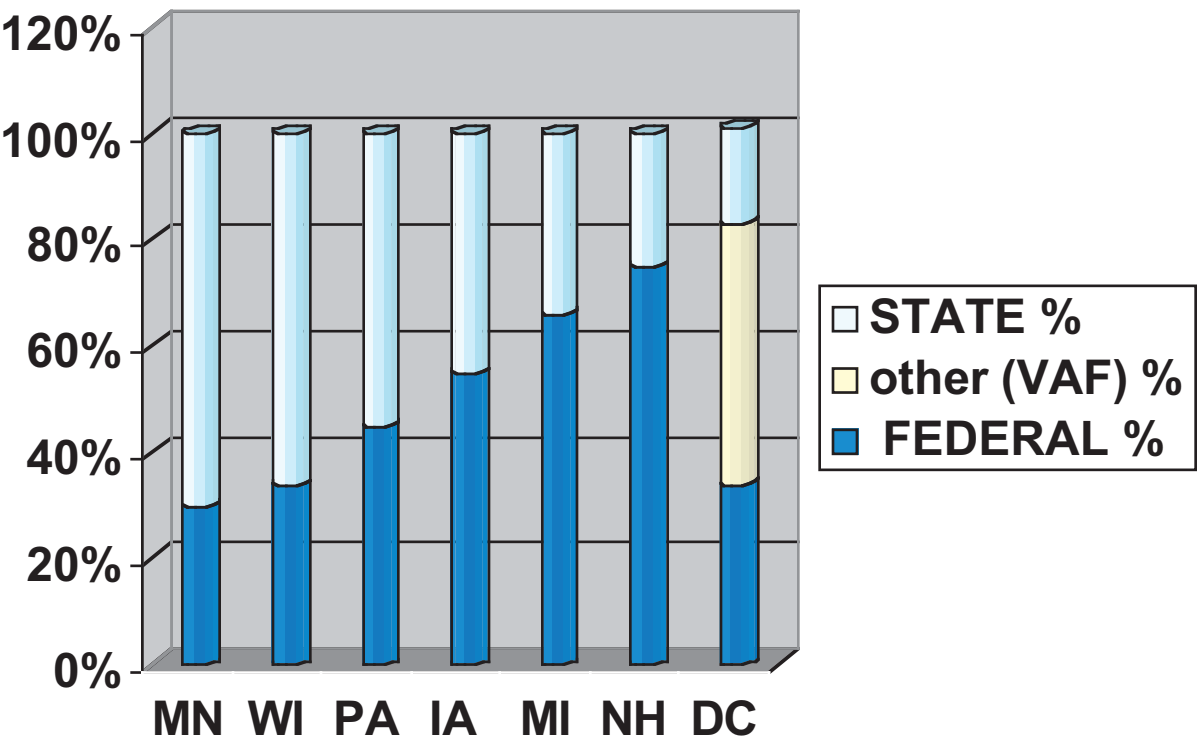
FY 2007 allocations of the VAF include awards to support core victim services, new residential facilities for victims of domestic violence, and a \$3.7 million set-aside for a Shelter Fund that will support the operations of shelter and transitional housing over the long term.

HISTORICAL VAF FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES



To award funds from the VAF to maintain core services at levels sufficient to meet the needs of crime victims in the future, OVS will explore means by which states have directed additional revenues to victim services, such as surcharges for specific crimes, surplus restitution, special license plates, juror fees, urban action bonds, and food and beverage taxes.

A COMPARISON OF STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING FOR VICTIM SERVICES



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY 2007

1. A combination of VAF, federal dollars, and local funding should always be available to maintain core services to victims of crime in the District.
2. OVS should continue to build capacity, where necessary, among the not-for-profit service providers when they agree to expand their services. However, when no provider is willing to take the lead on a much-needed program, OVS recommends conducting searches outside the District and outside the Tri-state area, if need be, to move forward.
3. OVS should cultivate relationships with District policymakers and their staff to better educate them about victim-focused issues.
4. OVS should have protocols in place to refer victims to other areas of the District government when they need assistance not available through traditional victim service referrals.
5. OVS should review the Model and Outreach Projects at the end of the first quarter of FY 2007, in anticipation of combining awards for FY 2008, and redirecting resources.
6. OVS should make every effort to collaborate with other District agencies to stay abreast of new developments in programs that affect crime victims, to avoid duplication of activities, to develop joint programs where there are shared goals, and to make the best use of limited resources.



FY 07 OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES FUNDED PROJECTS

Asian Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project  
**Project Title:** Advocates Program

Asian Pacific Islander Legal Resource Center  
**Project Title:** Crime Victims Assistance Partnership

AYUDA  
**Project Title:** AYUDA Emergency Assistance to Immigrant Victims of Crimes

**Project Title:** Expanding Social Services Support for Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence

**Project Title:** Expanding Support and Outreach to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence

Break the Cycle  
**Project Title:** Combating Violence against Young Victims

CASA for Children of DC  
**Project Title:** Abused and Neglected Children and Youth Advocacy Initiative

Center for Child Protection and Family Support  
**Project Title:** Child Sexual Abuse: Community-Based Intervention and Treatment

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**Project Title:** Child Model Project

**Project Title:** Special Mental Health Services

Children’s National Medical Center  
**Project Title:** Victims’ of Crime Assistance Program

**Project Title:** Child Model Project

Deaf Abused Women’s Network  
**Project Title:** Network Advocacy Program

District Alliance for Safe Housing  
**Project Title:** Emergency and Transitional Housing Project

DC Coalition against Domestic Violence  
**Project Title:** Survivors and Advocates Empowerment (SAFE) Program

**Project Title:** Model Project to Address Domestic Violence

**Project Title:** Outreach and Education Project / AWARE

**Project Title:** “On-call” Victim Advocacy Pilot Program

DC Child Advocacy Center  
**Project Title:** Safe Shores

**Project Title:** Child Model Project

DC Superior Court  
**Project Title:** Domestic Violence Training and Operational Enhancement Support

DC Legal Aid Society  
**Project Title:** Domestic Violence Intake Center SE

**Project Title:** Domestic Violence Contempt Enforcement Program

DC Rape Crisis Center  
**Project Title:** Adult Sexual Assault Services

**Project Title:** Child Sexual Assault Services

**Project Title:** Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program

**Project Title:** Sexual Assault Model Project

**Project Title:** Sexual Violence Outreach/ Awareness Project

**Project Title:** Hotline/Crisis Services

Hillcrest Children’s Program  
**Project Title:** Bright Futures

Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive  
**Project Title:** Project Safety

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House of Ruth  
**Project Title:** Three Sisters Program

**Project Title:** Domestic Violence Housing and Services

**Project Title:** Domestic Violence Support Center

Latin American Youth Center  
**Project Title:** Victims’ Assistance Program – Latina Girls

Mary’s Center For Maternal and Child Care, Inc.  
**Project Title:** Mental Health Program

Metropolitan Police Department  
**Project Title:** Family Liaison Specialist Unit

**Project Title:** Victim Services Unit

My Sister’s Place (MSP)  
**Project Title:** Increased Services to Victims of Domestic Violence

**Project Title:** Emergency Supportive Services

**Project Title:** Residential Services for Battered Women and their Children

**Project Title:** Non-Residential Counseling for Victims of Domestic Violence

National Center for Victims of Crime  
**Project Title:** Examining the Rights of DC Crime Victims

Office of the Attorney General (OAG)  
**Project Title:** OAG Victim Witness Unit Enhancement Program

**Project Title:** Services for Vulnerable Elderly and Survivors with Disabilities

Polaris Project  
**Project Title:** Greater DC Trafficking Intervention Program

Ramona’s Way  
**Project Title:** Counseling and Case Management

Reaching Out to Others Together (ROOT)  
**Project Title:** Homicide Model Project

**Project Title:** Homicide Community Outreach Project

Second Chance Employment  
**Project Title:** Employment Services to Victims of Domestic Violence

Survivors of Homicide  
**Project Title:** Homicide Model Project

**Project Title:** Homicide Community Outreach Project.

Wendt Center for Loss and Healing  
**Project Title:** DC Crisis Response Team

**Project Title:** Homicide Outreach Project Empowering Survivors (HOPES) Program

**Project Title:** Homicide Model Project

**Project Title:** Homicide Community Outreach Project

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Office of Victim Services is to ensure that all individuals who experience violent victimization have access to and obtain quality services provided by skilled providers at District and community agencies.

STAFF

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Crimes Expanding Social Services Support for Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence Expanding Support and Outreach to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence Combating Violence against Young Victims Abused and Neglected Children and Youth Advocacy Initiative Child Sexual Abuse: Community-Based Intervention and Treatment Child Model Project Special Mental Health Services Victims' of Crime Assistance Program Child Model Project Network Advocacy Program Emergency and Transitional Housing Project Survivors and Advocates Empowerment (SAFE) Program Model Project to Address Domestic Violence Outreach and Education Project CAVARE "On-call" Victim Advocacy Pilot Program Safe Shores Child Model Project Domestic Violence Training and Operational Enhancement Support Domestic Violence Intake Center SE Domestic Violence Contempt Enforcement Program Adult Sexual Assault Services Child Sexual Assault Services Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program Sexual Assault Model Project Sexual Violence 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# Office of Victim Services

## 2006 Annual Report

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